

HIGHGROUND

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Highground, previously named Highwater, is a publication of Montana's Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, Floodplain Management Program. Funding for this newsletter and other state floodplain management activities is sponsored through FEMA grants.

AMFM Conference, a Success

Learning, sharing and networking highlighted the 2007 AMFM Conference at the Holiday Inn in Bozeman from April 2- 5th. All presenters from the private and public sector offered interesting information for professionals involved in floodplain management. Pam Pogue, chair of a national association, the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM) was Wednesday's keynote speaker and provided a national perspective about floodplain management. Topics covered included permits and the benefits of a joint application form, hydrology and hydraulics, using Manning's Equation, wetlands, flood predictions, elevation certificates, NFIP insurance, Pre-Disaster Mitigation grants, case studies, aerial photography specifically for landscape management, the Map Modernization process as well as the state floodplain program. It truly was a full agenda. Note: Registration costs for local floodplain administrators were covered by the DNRC through a FEMA Community Assistance Program Grant.



Stream Permitting Workshop

This year's collaboration with Montana's Conservation Districts led conference participants to realize the importance of cooperation between Local Floodplain Administrators and staff from Montana's Conservation Districts.



Familiar Faces at AMFM

from left: Traci Sears-Tull- formerly Flathead County Planner and effective April 26 the new Montana NFIP Coordinator, Larry Van Rinsum- Flathead Conservation District, Pete Woll- Chairman for the Flathead Conservation District Board, Larry Schock- DNRC Regional Engineer, and Karl Christians-Executive Director of AMFM



Floodplain Administration – Don't Get Swept Away by Marijo Camrud

Floodplain management is the operation of a community program of corrective and preventative measures for reducing flood damage. The community floodplain manager (FPM) in Montana is responsible with administration of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) at the local level. The typical floodplain manager in Montana is further

challenged to administer a program that is sometimes complex, occasionally confusing, and frequently frustrating, in addition to numerous other duties.

To better assist the local floodplain, a Pertinent Reference Information Sheet has been developed and posted to the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation Water Resources website.

http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/wrd/water_op/floodplain/pdfs/pertinent_reference_info.pdf.

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Flathead Flood Awareness Week: Fun and Educational

Congratulations are in order for the organizers and supporters of Flood Awareness Week in Flathead County. At the helm for the week was Traci Sears-Tull, floodplain administrator for Flathead County. Patti Mason with the Flathead Conservation District quickly stepped to the plate and brilliantly developed a kids day with teachers from Edgerton school who brought 82 students to the Flathead County Fairground. A variety of activities took place. "We've taken the initiative by developing hands-on curriculum for students. Not only did the kids learn about flooding but also about land management concerns and development which can contribute to or reduce flooding hazards". Patti also mentioned that the Flathead Conservation District hopes that their initiation will make it easier for other counties to follow suit with future Flood Awareness Weeks in the state.



Audience from Evening Panel Discussion. Traci Sears-Tull moderated for the panel discussion representatives the National Weather Service, the Flathead Conservation District, Floodplain City of Kalispell, FEMA, Flathead County Emergency Services, The Army Corps of Engineers, and the Montana DNRC



6th Graders from Edgerton School participate in a sandbagging competition hosted by the Army Corps of Engineers staff out of Libby.



Dave Martin of the DNRC, Conservation Districts Bureau allows 6th graders to make their own discoveries about floodplains using an ingenious trailer that models water flow over the landscape

On Another Note: Floodplain Ordinances by Marijo Camrud

Corrective and preventative measures for reducing flood damage take a variety of forms, starting with floodplain ordinances and may include zoning, subdivision, or building requirements. The overriding purpose of the floodplain management regulations (i.e. ordinances) is to ensure that participating communities take into account flood hazards, to the extent that they are known, in all official actions relating to land management and use. Community participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is voluntary and requires the community to adopt floodplain ordinances that meet or exceed minimum NFIP requirements. The level of ordinance adopted by a community is dependent on the type of map FEMA has provided to the community; the specific requirements are described in 44 CFR Section 60.3.

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 60.3 (a) | FEMA has not provided any maps or data or a mapped community that has no Special Flood Hazard Area identified |
| 60.3 (b) | FEMA has provided a map with approximate A Zones |
| 60.3 (c) | FEMA has provided a FIRM with BFEs |
| 60.3 (d) | FEMA has provided a FIRM with BFEs and a map that shows a floodway |

It is important to note that these requirements are federal minimums and these requirements are cumulative. (Continued on page 5)

Meet Two New Staff with the DNRC Floodplain Program Coming on Board April 30th



Traci Sears-Tull, New State NFIP Coordinator

Traci Sears-Tull, CFM, was most recently a Planner II for Flathead County Planning & Zoning Office in Kalispell, Montana. Her duties included managing the floodplain program for Flathead County, the CRS (Community Rating System) program and she has also worked on rewriting the Flathead County Floodplain Regulations. Traci has worked in coordination with the Flathead Conservation District, Army Corps of Engineers (both Seattle and Omaha Departments), Department of Environmental Quality and the DNRC on all joint applications. For the last year, Traci has served as the Secretary of the AMFM board and was recently elected to the position of Vice Chairperson and is a member of the Association of State Floodplain Managers (ASFPM). Ms. Sears-Tull received a B.A. in Criminal Justice from Florida Atlantic University and is currently working on her M.P.A. at University of Montana. She became a Certified Floodplain Manager in 2006.



Mike Knutson, New State Floodplain Engineer

Coordinating the Floodplain Management Services with the Portland District of the US Army Corps of Engineers has equipped Mike with expertise in floodplain management. Additionally, in his 14 years experience as a hydraulic engineer in the private and public sectors he has used state-of-the-art Hydraulic and Hydrologic Computer Models for rivers, floodplains and estuaries. Mike's qualifications are backed by a Bachelors degree in Civil Engineering and a Masters degree in Water Resource Engineering as well as being a Registered Professional Engineer. Moving down the hall from the State Water Projects Bureau where he currently works as a hydraulic engineer shouldn't be a problem for Mike. He's tackled rivers in rafts, kayaks and canoes. Other interests of Mike's include skiing, backpacking and photography.

Who is FEMA Region VIII by Marijo Camrud

The FEMA regional office is located in Lakewood, Colorado. Region VIII coordinates FEMA Mitigation, Preparedness, and Disaster Response and Recovery activities, and works in partnership to provide program support and assistance to Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming. The Region VIII Director, Bob Flowers, was appointed to lead the region in August 2006.

The Mitigation Division of FEMA manages the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and a range of programs designed to reduce future losses to homes, businesses, schools, public buildings and critical facilities from floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, and other natural disasters. The Mitigation Division is comprised of three branches: Risk Analysis, Risk Reduction, and Risk Insurance. The Risk Insurance Branch has statutory authority to administer the NFIP and focuses on insurance and compliance aspects of the program.

Marijo Camrud, P.E., CFM is the FEMA NFIP program specialist for Montana. She works in partnership with the MT NFIP coordinator, Traci Sears-Tull to provide education, outreach, enrollment, ordinance updates/adoption review, training, program technical support, and compliance monitoring to property owners, industry professionals, and community floodplain administrators. Marijo can be reached in Lakewood, CO at 303-235-4835 or by email at Marijo.camrud@dhs.gov. Traci Sears- can be reached at 406-444-6654. Both Marijo and Traci are available to provide NFIP support and assistance. You are encouraged to contact them with your questions and issues.

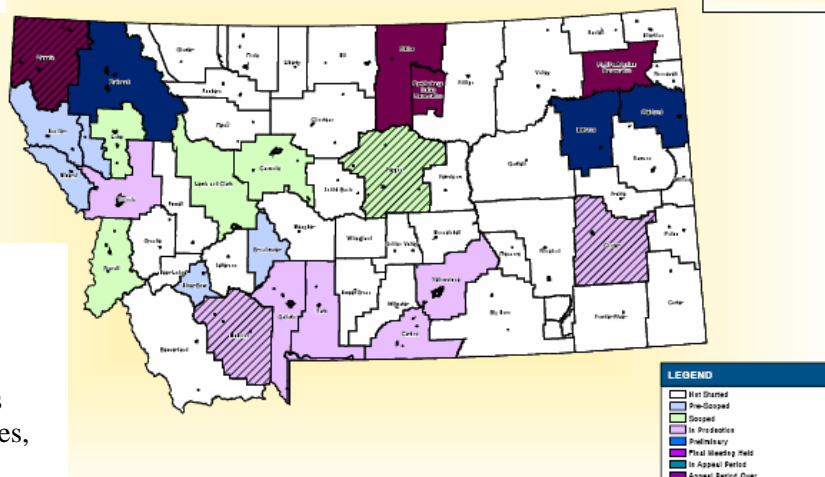
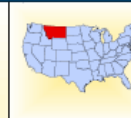
Additionally, FEMA publications can be ordered by calling 1-800-480-2520. Request the publication, using the FEMA number

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MONTANA MAP MOD DFIRM PROJECT STATUS

FEMA Map Showing the Progress and Projection for Map Modernization in Montana. For the full size version of the map email or phone Mary Guokas.



Map Modernization Progress Continues

The Map Modernization process is nearing its final stages for Flathead and Missoula Counties, in part as a result of reliable contracted work completed by the environmental engineering firm, PBS&J. Future contracted Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRM) work will be continued by PBS&J in Montana for the next two years. They are expected to complete map conversions for up to three additional counties: Cascade, Lewis and Clark, and Fergus.

According to Millie Bowman, Map Modernization Specialist with the DNRC, "We are well on the way to updating a majority of the flood hazard maps for our most populated regions. We look forward to continuing our work with PBS&J to deliver more reliable, accurate, and readily available flood maps that can be digitally integrated into our state, regional, and community disaster mitigation plans."

The table at right appeared in the last issue of the Highground and is worth repeating in this issue.

County	Status	2000 Population
1. Missoula County	In Progress	95,802
2. Flathead County	In Progress	74,471
3. Gallatin County	In Progress	67,831
4. Park County	In Progress	15,694
5. Carbon County	In Progress	9,552
6. Yellowstone County	Recently funded via 2006 grant	129,352
7. Lewis & Clark County	Scheduled for 2007	55,716
8. Cascade County	Scheduled for 2007	78,347
9. Fergus County Partial of county	Scheduled for 2007 or 2008	8,164
10. Lake County	Scheduled for 2007 or 2008	26,507
11. Ravalli County	Scheduled for 2008	36,070
12. Silver Bow County	Scheduled for 2008	29,417
13. Mineral County	Scheduled for 2008	3,884
14. Sanders County	Scheduled for 2008	10,227
15. Broadwater County	Scheduled for 2008	4,385



Check it out!

To learn more about the Map Modernization process in Montana, visit:

<http://www.montanadfirms.com/>

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(Floodplain Ordinances by Marijo Camrud: Continued from Page 2)

The state of Montana administers the NFIP to a higher standard than the minimum federal standards. The higher standard includes 0.5 foot rise of the BFE for those areas where a regulatory floodway is designated (rather than the federal standard of 1.0 foot) and the lowest floor for (insurance) rating of a structure to be 2 feet above BFE. To assist a community in adopting ordinances that meet minimum federal and state requirements, the DNRC has recently updated their model ordinances*. Communities in the process of examining or updating their community floodplain ordinances are encouraged, but not required, to use the state model ordinance. Using the state model ordinance ensures the community is in compliance with the federal and state requirements. BEFORE final adoption of ordinances, communities are required to provide a draft to the state and federal offices. Using the state model ordinance ensures the adoption process is timely and moves forward swiftly. Communities that adopt ordinances that are not reviewed at the state/federal level are in jeopardy of non-compliance which could result in probation or suspension of flood insurance.

*The state is continuing their examination of the state model floodplain ordinances, and welcome any comments you may have. Contact Traci Sears-Tull or Mary Guokas.



In an effort to make information easier to access on our webpage, a few updates and changes

http://www.mt.gov/wrd/water_op/floodplain/



Walt Sweet Place on Granite Creek, near Libby. Bank erosion, not flooding to the property caused a problem for a rental property owned by Walt Sweet. Still, Walt recognizes risks from flooding and now has flood insurance on his current residential property. This property was burned by the local fire department before it had an opportunity to fall into the creek.

Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grants

Kent Atwood, the Montana's State Hazard Mitigation Officer administers the Pre-Disaster Mitigation program in Montana. Up to \$3 million dollars per project is available to counties with a PDM plan in place. Projects may be related to flood mitigation or mitigation from other hazards such as wild fire. Kent notes, "A critical consideration as to whether a project gets funded is related to the cost benefit ratio". Kent was alerted to the above situation. Perhaps, other adjacent homeowners to Walt Sweet's land will have other options.

For more information about the PDM program, contact Kent Atwood at
Disaster and Emergency Services
P.O. Box 4789 - 1900 Williams Street
Helena, Montana 59604-4789

Phone: (406) 841-3960
FAX: (406) 841-3966
katwood@mt.gov

**Floodplain 101 Training
June 26th**

Helena*

**Mountain Meadow Inn
9:00 AM -3:30 PM**

**Register by June 19th
With Bri Shipman 444-
0862**

Or bshipman@mt.gov

**For more information,
contact Bri or Mary
Guokas at 444-1343 or**

mgukas@mt.gov

***Helena was selected based on
"votes".**

DNRC Floodplain Staff in Helena
Laurence Storky, Bureau Chief
Traci Sears-Tull, Floodplain Program Manager: 444-6654
Mike Knutson, State Floodplain Engineer: 444-6664
Millie Hefner (formerly Millie Bowman), MAPMOD
Specialist: 444-6656
Mary Guokas, Editor and Floodplain Outreach Specialist:
444-1343
Bri Shipman, Administrative Assistant: 444-0862

**DNRC Regional Engineers offer Floodplain assistance in
different parts of the state.**
Dave Adair: 247-4423
Jim Beck: 444-6695
Marvin Cross: 265-5516
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